

**On the Fence**

**Decisions! Decisions! I found myself on the fence over a choice I had to make this fall.** I have been playing soccer since I was seven years old. I enjoy the game and have become a very good player. In fact, last year I received the Most Valuable Player award. However, I am now in seventh grade and have the opportunity to play on the school football team. It has always been a dream of mine to play football. Because they are both fall sports, I couldn't go out for both teams. I was faced with a big decision, and it was not an easy choice: **the soccer team would be a fun, familiar experience, while playing football would mean learning a new game and meeting new people.**

**Both** teams would definitely be fun. I enjoy being part of a team and **both** sports require a lot of teamwork. **In soccer, you have to work together to move the ball down the field, past the goalie, and into the net. In football, if you want to score a touchdown, everyone on the team has to contribute.** Another thing I like about **both** sports is the energy you need to play them. In both soccer and football you are using your muscles and keeping your body healthy. That is important to me. I also think you use your mind in **both** sports. When I play soccer, I'm always thinking ahead and making decisions. From listening and talking to kids who play football, I knew I would use these same mental skills.

**On the one hand,** I know a lot about soccer. I know the rules, the plays, and the footwork. It would be easy for me to join the soccer team. **On the other hand,** if I decided on football, I would have to learn new plays and new rules. I would have to work harder if I chose football. Should I go with a sure thing or take a chance on something new?

There was something else to consider. In soccer, I know my teammates and my coaches; they're like a second family to me. If I stopped playing soccer, it would be like leaving my family. **However,** football would give me a chance to meet new people. It would also help me see whether I could be successful at another sport. Football would be a real challenge, and I think it's important to have new challenges.

I suppose by now you're wondering, "Which one did he choose?" The chance to try something new and face a new challenge helped me decide that football was the game for me. So next Saturday, if you're not too busy, come down to the football field. Be sure to check out number 22; that will be me, learning as much as I can about the great sport of football.

introduction captures readers' attention and makes them wonder what the essay will be about

thesis statement describes overall relationship between the choices

transition shows that this paragraph will be about similarities; writer uses "both" throughout this paragraph to show comparison  
details show how soccer and football are similar

essay proceeds point by point, first discussing similar points and then moving on to differences  
transitions show that writer is contrasting soccer and football

transition shows contrast

conclusion shows readers the result of the comparison